

THE UNITED STATES AND JAPAN.

The alternate bounce, bluster, and misrepresentation with which certain American papers commonly approach foreign topics are no doubt amusing to their readers, but unfortunately they are also calculated to create mischief by giving wrong impressions. A portion of the American Press appears to be animated with an ardent desire to vilify Great Britain on every possible occasion, and no falsehood is too gross, no misstatement of fact too glaring for these unscrupulous and unrelenting scribblers to palm off on ignorant and unthinking readers. If these scoundrelly statements, decried by professional assassins of reputation, were merely the outcome of ignorance, the slanders might be more pardonable, but there is too much reason to believe that many of them are concocted out of malice and hatred. The Irish Fenians are largely represented on the American Press, and it is doubtless to persons of the O'Donovan Rossa stamp that we are indebted for the outpourings of venomous spite which

THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS

In the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements on the 4th instant a very sad picture was drawn of the state of the Public Service in that Colony. The occasion was the second reading of the Public Servants (Liabilities) Bill. The object of that measure is to prevent members of the Service in receipt of salaries of less than \$150 a month being sued for money lent. The chetties, or money lenders, are a power in the Straits, and a large proportion of the Civil Servants are in their clutches. Major McALLISTER, the Colonial Engineer, speaking in support of the Bill, referred to the state of things in his own department. Numbers and numbers of his men, he said, were in debt—draughtsmen, surveyors, and overseers. This affected the carrying out of the contracts. Chinese contractors, he said, were as a rule independent of the chetties, but the Chinese could not have everything, and it was necessary to pit Malay and Singhalese contractors against them in order to get the public work done for the sum allowed. These had no money, and had to get advances from a money-lender, who might not be the same who had lent the public servant, but the chetties went hand in hand together; and if the overseer then superintended the work as he ought, the chetty from whom he had money immediately brought pressure to bear upon him, and would say "Now look here, if you are not less strict with my friend I will press you for my debt, and either you will be put in gaol or else a report will be sent to Government and you will lose your berth." All the official members seem to have endorsed this very unsatisfactory view of the Public Service, and of course they ought to know. To prevent this corruption the Government propose that members of the Service in receipt of salaries below \$150 a month shall not be liable to be sued on claims for money lent. They may, however, be sued for necessities supplied, or on mortgages of property. The unofficial members all opposed the Bill, not because they did not recognise the existence of the evil at which it is aimed,

The minutes were referred to the Finance Committee.

REPORT.

The Report of the Superintendent of Victoria Gaol for 1885 was laid on the table.

HONGKONG—IMPORTED AND EXPORTED GOODS.

HIS EXCELLENCY—Before giving further I desire to refer to a subject of some importance to the community, especially to some members of it. During the last year I have received a number of petitions from various quarters, asking that the community should be relieved to some extent, and that there should be brought about a cessation of Sunday work in the harbour. Having a very great sympathy with those who desire relief in this matter, and being able to afford them relief to the extent of my ability, I have on the subject very full consideration. I have made inquiries in various quarters, and having at length come to the determination that it is out of my power to afford the relief desired, I can only afford the relief desired and be free of very serious injury to the community. I think it only right that I should make public to some extent the considerations which have so far affected my mind, and that I should state to this effect one finds that those people who desire relief especially are the Europeans employed on vessels in the harbour, numbering, as far as I can make out, about 1,000. These people are employed on land in connection with vessels—and that of these a very large proportion being in Hongkong only a few Sundays in the year would be benefited only for those few Sundays. Then the question arises, how can I afford to do this, and how can we benefit them? With a view to find how such benefit was desired by workmen in other parts of the world I have made inquiries in various quarters, and have found that, practically one, namely, the closing of custom houses on Sunday, for beyond a few obsolete statutes I can find no law on the subject anywhere. Sunday labour in the harbour is either necessary, or it is not necessary, and if necessary and for no other reason. Now if we are fortunately without a custom house in Hongkong it is evident that means is not open to us, and that we have no alternative, and I know of except a law enforcing imprisonment. That being so, the next question that arises is, what must be the scope of such a law. I am informed it could be made so that the vessels which were employed at once very great advantage would be given to Chinese vessels and junk, on the part of which the rivalry is already keen enough. We must therefore have a law applicable to all vessels in the harbour without distinction. I am informed that I doubt if it would be severely possible to enforce it. A number of people being sent to gaol for working in the harbour on Sunday when they were not employed, and the community pursuing their usual avocations on land and doing so without any molestation whatever. I venture to say that not only would that be a case of a law which would be a great injury amongst the Chinese, but that it would be a great injury by British law which has done so much for the

Colony as cannot be contemplated for a moment. These are my reasons why, at all events for the present, I do not think it expedient to discuss the subject, and I wish what I have said to be taken as an answer to the various petitions I have received on the subject.

THE PROPOSITION OF THE AMERICAN BOARD.—**MR. BAKER** said that he had read the Bill, and he thought it was the first reading of this Bill. Hon. members are doubtless aware that the provisions relating to the compulsory examination of women under the Contagious Diseases Ordinance of 1867 have been suspended. The object of the present Ordinance is to eliminate these provisions from the statute book and at the same time to consolidate and amend the law relating to the prevention of venereal diseases. The Ordinance contains certain clauses of the Contagious Diseases Ordinance 1867 with reference to the registration of brothels and relating to the Lock Hospital, making this a fresh institution, and that which relates to the treatment of the venereal disease in the present session.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded the Bill and read a first time.

THE PRIMA RECLAMATION BILL.

MR. BAKER said that he had read the Bill. He desired to say that the schedule of areas and amounts—the areas of land to be apportioned among the frontage landholders, and the amounts these landholders will have to pay, has not been made out yet. The Ordinance has been passed, but has to be kept before the Council, and in order to make way for a number of other measures which still have to be passed, and without keeping this in the way, the Council have decided to postpone the passing of the Ordinance, and to make a plan of the general work without the divisions of land apportioned among the different landholders. Another plan, with these details in regard to the apportionment of areas, will be made in the passing of the Ordinance, and to it will be attached a schedule containing the amounts each landholder will have to pay for the area allotted to him. It is also thought desirable that with a view to the apportionment, certain matters should elapse between the lodging of that plan and the schedules of the plan and the time when anybody can come in and agree to it. It is considered that it is better that there should be no errors in the apportionment of areas and that one landholder having more than his right proportion might come in and agree, the very day after, and in that case the Government would not be obliged to pay him more than his right proportion, but they would be compensated by the public treasury. It does not say that the civil is very probable, but one or two things have occurred which show me it is to say the least possible.

MR. BAKER suggested the lodging of that detailed plan and schedule and the time when anybody is allowed to agree to it, and during that time there will be every opportunity for finding out what the Government have done, and what they have all been prepared. They do not say any

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or upwards of a year.

3.—I append as usual returns showing the number of punishments during the year for the most common offences, and the statistics for the last three years being shown alongside for the sake of comparison.

4.—During the year there were three cases of insubordination towards and also an offence of the kind, an award of discipline of such offences as compared with previous years. The offenders were fined and awarded corporal punishment.

5.—The risk of conspiracies and combination among Prisoners, I have observed to be more pressing as always, especially with a lot of criminals employing in association. As in previous years during the last year we have had proof of the same in two desperate attempts of a large number of escape from the prison, and in the last the Government the more anxious Prisoners will be bolder and effect an escape. On the last occasion, on the 15th September, those attempting to escape were recaptured, but unfortunately the escapees were not recaptured, and two of the men and of two Prisoners were lost, while four other Prisoners were wounded but recovered. A full report of the circumstances was submitted at the time.

IN: INTERNAL LABOUR.

11.—The Chain gang on Public Works has been working during the year with an average strength of 50 or 60 Prisoners—less than last year. I had to reduce one and send some two to the six gangs on the coast, and some to the work on the dock list during the year. The work was carried on at a considerable distance, about three miles from the Gaol; the work was not very satisfactory, but the trust of the six gangs on the coast, and the work on the dock list during the year. The work was carried on at a considerable distance, about three miles from the Gaol; the work was not very satisfactory, but the trust of the six gangs on the coast, and the work on the dock list during the year.

12.—As to other industrial work, we have much to be done, and we have been, by the way, to the various industries and passages as workshops. As to the industries of coin, yarn work, shoe-making, at book-binding have been increased. I append the usual returns of Gaol Industries for the year.

A. GORDON,
Superintendent.

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SUPREME COURT.

18th April.

IN ORIGINAL JURISDICTION.

BEFORE MR. JEFFREY CLARKE,
ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE.

FENWICK V. MARTY.

Mr. Francis, O.C., instructed by Messrs Wotter and Deacon, appeared for the plaintiff, and the Acting Attorney-General (Hon. A. J. Leach) instructed by Messrs Sharp, Johnson, and Stokes for the defendant.

HIS LORDSHIP in giving judgment in this case said the plaintiff's claim was for \$15,758, made up in the following way:—Under a contract between

or he could have kept them and returned damaged by reason of the conditions of the contract. The matter was referred to the arbitrator to speak in favor of a refund at Hainan. His opinion defendants retained the steamers plaintiffs had paid traditionally. That was the idea of the contract. The arbitrator said that the defendants had not been asked to return the steamers until and then August 18. It seemed to him that as plaintiffs had expressly agreed that the satisfaction of the French claims should be deferred until the steamers had been returned, the defendants should be bound to return the steamers being a breach of warranty, to return the vessels until that condition was fulfilled. Therefore therefore that plaintiffs' claim for the expenses made by the defendants. These costs amounted to the sum of \$183 and obviously that must be disallowed as it was a voluntary payment made by the plaintiffs in order to put themselves in a proper position with the defendants. It was justified, although the vessels had been returned in the contract, but they had no right to any interest and that would be disallowed on both sides. De-fendant was the ground followed, in addition to the cost of the steamers, \$18.6. Had plaintiffs had the steamers for 100 days into Court \$82.60 and these two sums would together \$838.86 to be deducted from plaintiffs' claims, leaving a balance of \$6,600, for which plaintiffs' claim was allowed. The arbitrator said that plaintiffs' claim would be dismissed with costs.

HONGKONG RIFLE ASSOCIATION

The seventh prize meeting of the above Association opened on Friday, the 19th inst. at Kowloon. The weather was very fine and the light on Friday was not all that could be desired, while the rather strong wind on the same day may account for the fact that the shooting round was not quite up to the average of last year's. The prize was won by Mr. J. J. Keewick, a large number entering for the various events both days. The highest score at the 200 yards was for 34, at the 500 yards 47 out of a possible 50. The prize for the 1000 yards was won on Saturday there were a large number of visitors at the range to witness the shooting for the Ladies' Purse, Ladies' Competition, and the Councils' Competition. H. E. the Governor, Lady Duns, Mr. W. H. Watson, and others were among these present. The Ladies' Purse was won by P. C. Warnock, and the Ladies' Competition was carried off by Lieut. Carlyle, the nomination of Mr. Shelton Hooper. The Councils' Competition was won by Mr. J. J. Keewick. The latest addition to the Legislative Council, Mr. Major-General Edwards being second. The prizes for the Ladies' and Councils' Competitions were presented by Mr. J. J. Keewick. The Ladies' Purse was won by Miss Sexton. At the conclusion of the distribution, the Secretary, Mr. Shelton Hooper, thanked Lady Duns for presenting the Ladies' Purse, and Mr. Watson for presenting the Councils' Purse. The meeting was played in, making up the purse. During

